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# Comparative Policy Analysis

## The Design of Measures

Charles W. Anderson

Once again, political scientists are turning their attention to the concrete problems of their own time and place. After a generation of dedication to the canons of "pure science," there is a renewed enthusiasm for the potential of the discipline as a policy science. The desire to build greater powers of policy analysis into political science is evident in a wide variety of recent work and discussion. Thus, in his 1969 presidential address to the American Political Science Association, David Easton announced the emergence of the "postbehavioral revolution," one aspect of which is the growing feeling that political scientists ought to be more actively involved in the examination of critical public issues.<sup>1</sup> William and Joyce Mitchell structured a recent introductory textbook so that the student sees public problem solving as the central purpose of political analysis.<sup>2</sup> So, too, the Committee on Governmental and Legal Processes of the Social Science Research Council sponsored an evaluation of the role of political scientists in the study of public policies, which they saw as the most urgent and timely question facing the discipline.<sup>3</sup> Surveys of the role of policy analysis in the political science curriculum have been conducted.<sup>4</sup> And a new body of literature in the field of policy making and policy analysis is rapidly developing.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Easton, "The New Revolution in Political Science," *American Political Science Review*, LXIII (December 1969), 1051-61.

<sup>2</sup> William and Joyce Mitchell, *Political Analysis and Public Policy: An Introduction to Political Science* (Chicago, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Austin Ranney, ed. *Political Science and Public Policy* (Chicago, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> Charles O. Jones, "The Policy Approach: An Essay on Teaching American Politics," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, XIII (May 1969), 284-93.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the writings cited in other notes, books that indicate the temper of this new interest would include: Raymond A. Bauer and Kenneth H. Gergen, eds. *The Study of Policy Formation* (New York, 1968); Ira Sharkansky, ed.

Of course, the term "policy analysis" does not identify a single research orientation. Some scholars focus on specific kinds of public policies as a way of sharpening our observations and explanations of political phenomena. They seek to show how the policy-making process varies, depending on the particular issue under consideration.<sup>6</sup> Others are specifically concerned with the evaluation of policy outcomes and their impact on the political system.<sup>7</sup> Still others are interested in the general, abstract delineation of policy-making processes.<sup>8</sup>

In the present article we shall be concerned primarily with the aspects of policy analysis related to the problem of public choice and with the role of comparative politics in that endeavor. The intellectual task becomes that of the definition and clarification of public problems, the search for alternative public means for coping with these problems, and the analysis of probable consequences that would follow from the adoption of particular courses of public action.<sup>9</sup> In a sense, the vantage point of the political scientist shifts from that of detached observer to that of surrogate policy maker. An appropriate analogy is to the orientation of the economist who postulates a certain set of public objectives and seeks to determine the course of action most appropriate to their realization. Giovanni Sartori states well the distinction as it applies to the problem of development: "With reference to economic development the economist is a planner, with reference to political development the political scientist is a spectator. The economist intervenes: His knowledge is applied knowledge. The political scientist awaits: He explains what happens, but does not make it happen."<sup>10</sup>

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*Policy Analysis in Political Science* (Chicago, 1970); Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Examples of this approach include: Theodore Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case-Studies and Political Theory," *World Politics*, XVI (July 1964), 677-715; Raymond A. Bauer, Ithiel de Sola Pool, and Lewis A. Dexter, *American Business and Public Policy* (New York, 1964); Lewis A. Froman, "The Categorization of Policy Contents" in Austin Ranney, ed. *Political Science and Public Policy*, pp. 41-52.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Suchman, *Evaluative Research* (New York, 1967); Richard C. Snyder and James A. Robinson, *National and International Decision-Making* (New York, 1961), p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Charles E. Lindblom, *The Policy-Making Process* (Englewood Cliffs, 1968); David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, *A Strategy of Decision* (New York, 1963); Yehezkel Dror, *Public Policymaking Reexamined* (San Francisco, 1968).

<sup>9</sup> An insightful consideration of the implications of this approach appears in James W. Davis, Jr. and Kenneth Dolbeare, *Little Groups of Neighbors: The Selective Service System* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 191-93.

<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Sartori, "Political Development and Political Engineering," in John D. Montgomery and Albert O. Hirschman, eds. *Public Policy*, XVII (Cambridge [Mass.], 1968), p. 261.

In recent years the training of political scientists has focused on defining situations, while economics has developed habits of thinking toward strategies of action. One powerful statement of the economist's style which has special applicability to comparative analysis is found in the work of the Dutch economist and Nobel laureate, Jan Tinbergen.<sup>11</sup> The project I shall describe for comparative politics is basically an extension of Tinbergen's way of thinking to the conventional concerns of political science. I have also been interested in defining approaches to policy analysis that were jointly political and economic, for these aspects of policymaking are never separate in practice.<sup>12</sup>

### Comparative Politics and Policy Analysis

In the present effort to build an applied political science, the focus is inward, on the problems of our own society. It is the product of a generation that sees Western society passing through a most urgent and critical period. That generation wishes to develop professional skills that are useful in the diagnosis and resolution of these problems. The potential contribution of comparative politics to this endeavor is not immediately apparent. The postwar renaissance of comparative politics came at a time when the problems of other peoples, particularly in the developing areas, seemed far more urgent than those of the West. Certainly, we would not want to argue that the new internationalism of American political science should be abandoned and that we turn inward, in response to the mood of the times. The more tantalizing problem is to specify how the skills of systematic comparative analysis can contribute to the problem-solving resources of any given society.

Of course the cosmopolitan intellectual, aware of developments and possibilities in other cultures, has always been a critical agent of change. He has served as something of a broker of good ideas between nations, and, more often than not, he has seen foreign experience from the perspective of the problems of his own nation. As Alexis de Toqueville points out in respect to his inquiries into the status and prospects of the American democracy, "It is not, then, merely to satisfy a legitimate

<sup>11</sup> Jan Tinbergen, *Economic Policy: Principles and Design* (Amsterdam, 1956) and *Central Planning* (New Haven, 1964). It should be noted that I am distinguishing Tinbergen's work on policy analysis from his pioneering research in econometrics. This framework was used in an interesting comparative study of economic policy making: E. S. Kirschen et al., *Economic Policy in Our Time*, 3 vols. (Chicago, 1964).

<sup>12</sup> Additional perspectives on the uses of political economic reasoning in political science are suggested in William C. Mitchell, "The New Political Economy," *Social Research*, XXXV (Spring 1968), 78-110.

curiosity that I have examined America; my wish has been to find there instruction by which we may ourselves profit.”<sup>13</sup>

In recent years, the emphasis in comparative politics has been on cultural detachment. The stance of a de Toqueville has been exchanged for that of a Herskovitz or a Malinowski. Nonetheless, the longer tradition of comparative analysis has aspired to policy relevance. The classical tradition of comparison involved the inductive examination of diverse cases in an attempt to establish, in Aristotle and Montesquieu, principles of constitutional form, in Machiavelli, explicit maxims of statecraft. The currently maligned late nineteenth-century emphasis on constitutional engineering did, as Harry Eckstein points out, accompany the great period of constitution writing in the West. The role of the political scientist in the diffusion of liberal democratic institutions in that period perhaps parallels the present-day work of economists in spreading the paraphernalia of post-Keynesian economic institutions and practice.<sup>14</sup> In the postwar emphasis on the politics of the developing nations there was also some consciousness of the implications of analysis for policy recommendation.

A preoccupation with macropolitics no doubt limits the practical utility of comparative analysis. Since Aristotle, the emphasis has been on the normative evaluation of total political systems. Taxonomies of political forms have been constructed, and the advantages and disadvantages of different types of government weighed. This tradition has been carried into even the most contemporary research. Political development is usually discussed in terms of the relative merits of mass mobilization, military, tutelary, and democratic systems. This focus on the largest question of politics, the structure of the regime itself, probably has something to do with the limited policy relevance of the field. After all, the architectonic act of government is rare. Moreover, when it happens, the expert analyst plays little role in the outcome. By and large, comparative politics has not adopted styles of analysis pertinent to “normal” politics, to that “piecemeal social engineering” that Karl Popper commends as the appropriate approach of the policy analyst in a democratic society.<sup>15</sup>

Total political institutions and processes emerge out of a specific cul-

<sup>13</sup> Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, 1945), 1:14–15.

<sup>14</sup> Harry Eckstein, “A Perspective on Comparative Politics, Past and Present,” in Harry Eckstein and David A. Apter, eds. *Comparative Politics: A Reader* (New York, 1963), pp. 10–23.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London, 1945), 1:138–48. This, of course, is also the message of Charles E. Lindblom’s notion of incrementalism. See especially his *The Intelligence of Democracy* (New York, 1965).

ture and history. One uproots and transplants them at great peril, if one is able to at all. As Daniel Lerner suggests, institutions are not as apt to be transferred as transformed, with consequences that are hard to foresee.<sup>16</sup> It is hard for systematic social science to say much about the transfer of larger institutions except in an historical sense. The extraordinary circumstances that lead to such diffusion of institutions is usually far removed from the systemic, normal process of politics that afford us the basis for such sensible judgments on the probable course of events as we are able to make.

The problem, then, is to find an approach to comparative policy analysis that deals more with the bits and pieces of politics than with overall structures and processes.

### **The Design of Measures: A Problem for Comparative Analysis**

Politics is always a matter of making choices from the possibilities offered by a given historical situation and cultural context. From this vantage point, the institutions and procedures of government and the legitimate powers of the state to shape the course of economy and society become the equipment provided by a society to its leaders for the solution of public problems. They are the tools of the trade of statecraft. Metaphorically, we can imagine, as Herbert March and James Simon do, that the heritage of means, embedded in political structures, is like a "warehouse full of semifabricated parts." The normal process of decision making, as they suggest, involves a long search through a sequence of means and ends, until a formula for action is found in the existing repertoire of programs and techniques.<sup>17</sup> The skillful policy maker, then, is he who can find appropriate possibilities in the institutional equipment of his society. Furthermore, seen in this way, the capacities of leaders are conditioned by the nature of the possibilities that the political system offers them.

In fact, politics seems to be more of an adaptive than an innovative art. True political invention is relatively rare. Creative statecraft seems far more like husbandry—a matter of adapting to changing conditions by nurturing selected strains and species—than like technological discovery and invention.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Lerner, "The Transformation of Institutions," in William B. Hamilton, ed. *The Transfer of Institutions* (Durham, 1961), pp. 3–26. Another revealing commentary on such problems is David Reisman's "Football in America: A Study of Culture Diffusion," *Individualism Reconsidered* (Glencoe, 1954), pp. 242–57.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert March and James Simon, *Organizations* (New York, 1958), p. 191.

<sup>18</sup> This seems consistent with Carl Friedrich's reflections on political creativity

The role of the policy analyst becomes apparent. He assists in constructing an inventory of potential public capabilities and resources that might be pertinent in any problem-solving situation; he tries to evaluate the applicability of alternative combinations of actions; and he seeks to evaluate the potential and actual consequences of patterns of public action. One function of comparative policy analysis might be to extend the process of policy search, policy formulation, and evaluation across the jurisdictional frontiers of a single policy, and thus to enrich the problem-solving capabilities of any society.

### Procedural Instrumentation

The first issue of public problem solving is to decide *how* to decide. The practical question is how to fashion a decision-making procedure that will result in the most adequate public choice. The problem is one of the choice, orchestration, and sequence of techniques of participation, consultation, research, and deliberation that will insure the effective consideration and resolution of a public issue.

Karl Deutsch sees procedural instrumentation primarily in terms of the information functions of governing, and suggests the role of comparative analysis.

The channels and institutions by means of which a government or a party obtains and uses information concerning its own constituency and personnel and the efficiency with which such information is collected, applied and perhaps stored for future use in records or in the memories of men, are all promising objects of comparative political studies. In democracies, such studies may deal with the comparative effectiveness of hearings, opinion polls, "grass roots" politics, pressure-group activities and the like. In dictatorships . . . such studies may throw some light on the ability of particular political regimes or organizations to appraise their own internal resources and obstacles, and to steer their own behavior accordingly.<sup>19</sup>

Constitutional rules are the most general body of procedures. These must be invoked for all classes of decisions committing the polity. Additional specifications may be made for particular kinds of decisions, such as consultation with economic advisors or central banking authorities for certain types of economic decisions. There may be certain con-

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in *Man and His Government* (New York, 1963), pp. 367–84. The view also seems compatible with Thomas L. Thorson's imaginative argument that the biological rather than the physical sciences provide the more propitious metaphor for political inquiry. See his *Biopolitics* (New York, 1970).

<sup>19</sup> Karl Deutsch. *The Nerves of Government* (New York, 1963), p. 160.



ventions or customs relating to consultation between major groups in the society. All of these are part of the "procedural equipment" of the society. In addition, there is a complex legacy of possible forms of consultation, investigation, study, and deliberation that may or may not be activated, depending on the content of the particular decision at hand and the judgment of those involved as to what is appropriate under the circumstances.

In all procedures, there is a certain discretion left to the policy maker as to how a particular institution or process will be used in the formulation of a specific decision. For example, in his relationship with the legislature, one "policy entrepreneur" may feel that his task is done when he has prepared a technically competent proposal. It is then up to legislative leaders to generate political support for the measure. In other words, in his own vision of the procedural scheme, the policy maker "uses" the legislature to generate consent. Another policy maker may understand his job as that of presenting the legislature with a politically feasible proposal. For him, it might be appropriate to "equip" his policy-making procedure with an ad hoc committee of the powerful to refine the administration proposal into politically acceptable form. For the point of view of this policy maker, the only planned use for the legislature is that of formal ratification. Albert O. Hirschman provides an illustration of precisely this point in his study of the formulation of an agrarian reform law in Colombia.<sup>20</sup>

From this point of view, the institutional heritage of a society, as well as both formal and informal protocols that attach to how decisions will be made, constitutes a stock of equipment available to decision makers for the development of public choices. One function of comparative analysis, then, includes the inventory of the "warehouse full of semi-fabricated parts" available to policy makers in fashioning decision systems. In the comparative evaluation of political systems, we might want to focus on the richness and flexibility of the procedural equipment provided to decision makers by the political system. It also becomes possible to evaluate the performance of policy makers, i.e., the effectiveness of their use of the institutional resources made available to them by their society.<sup>21</sup>

The design of procedures for specific problem-solving situations also becomes a choice target for applied political science. Based on his

<sup>20</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Journeys toward Progress* (New York, 1963), pp. 144-45.

<sup>21</sup> This is what Hirschman tried to do in his study of "Reformmongering" in Latin America. See his *Journeys toward Progress*. It is also the theme of Charles W. Anderson, *The Political Economy of Modern Spain* (Madison, 1970).



knowledge of the procedural repertoire of a particular political system, the analyst may be able to recommend innovative ways of going about the business of formulating policy in particular issue areas.

The possibility of such procedural engineering raises some serious problems about the role of the policy analyst as policy adviser. Economists have faced these, too, and they have not succeeded in resolving them satisfactorily. Normally, the economic adviser's art is that of fashioning measures adequate to the achievement of objectives specified by the political authorities. If extended to the process of procedural instrumentation, such a definition of the role of the policy analyst would result in a crude Machiavellianism, a matter of expediting the policy maker's purposes. After all, what the policy maker seeks in manipulating procedure is the achievement of his goals, the reduction of friction, conflict, skepticism, and "cognitive dissonance." The purpose of a well-contrived procedural system is not this, of course, but rather the exposure of alternative formulations of the problem, the elaboration of different courses of action, and the delineation of potential consequences as seen by the interests to be affected.

It is of course the faith of the democrat that the policy makers' desire to fashion a relatively frictionless, efficient decision system should be resisted. The purpose of democratic procedure, after all, is not to make policy making easier, but to make it more adequate.

There are at least three tests of the adequacy of a procedural system that can detach evaluation from the purposes of political leaders. First, how broad is the range of problems, how rich and flexible the alternatives that are generated for the consideration of policy makers? Second, and complimentary to the first, what is the comparative efficiency of the system in coming to conclusions, in reducing alternatives and possibilities to definitive choice?<sup>22</sup> Third, how close is the fit between intention and outcome? We assume that no public policy is "perfect," in the sense that it has no unanticipated consequences. However, we also assume that better policies correctly anticipate and provide for more of the consequences of choice. Since policy making is an ongoing process, the consequences of a decision made at time X become the problem to be solved at time Y. The statement of the problem at time Y represents the unfinished business of a choice made at X. Why then was the problem posed at Y not resolved at time X? We may find that the situation has changed in ways that no policy maker could reasonably have anticipated. Or we may find that part or all of the new problem was known or know-

<sup>22</sup> This test of "time lags" from initiation to resolution of a problem in different systems was applied in the analysis of economic policy in Western nations prepared by E. S. Kirschen et al., *Economic Policy in Our Time*, pp. 265-93.

able when the first policy was adopted. If this is the case, what went wrong? Was the decision-making procedure inadequate? Did it frame a less than sufficiently complex and problematic portrayal of the situation for the statesman?

Of course, since each policy-making process is to some extent a "voyage of discovery,"<sup>23</sup> it would be quite crude to evaluate a decision simply by looking at what happened that was not supposed to happen. We must also consider "feedback," the capacity of the system to correct itself over time. Thus, one does evaluate the decision made at X in terms of the problem at Y, but one does so taking into account the way in which policy making between X and Y helps correct for the deficiencies in the first choice.

In the design of procedural systems, the most basic and straightforward task of the political scientist is simply to inventory the possible combinations and sequences of instruments that might be useful in the processing of different kinds of problems under specified circumstances. The role of comparative analysis is merely that of extending the search for ideas and possibilities across national frontiers.<sup>24</sup>

The current discussion of the Scandinavian ombudsman institution in the United States illustrates the normal course of such analysis. The role of the student of comparative politics has been first the conventional one of simply describing how the institution works abroad. A few have gone beyond to suggest indicated adaptations that might be appropriate to the United States. Only in such work as that of Walter Gellhorn, however, do we begin to approach the level of inquiry that might be expected of true comparative policy analysis. By analyzing the ombudsman as part of a more inclusive inventory of approaches to the function of protecting citizens against abuses by public authorities, he is able to show something of the range of alternatives that exists in the modern political repertoire for working with this problem, and he is able to suggest some of the advantages and limitations of different approaches by comparative analysis.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Albert O. Hirschman, *Development Projects Observed* (Washington, 1967), p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> A good example of a very basic, suggestive use of comparative analysis is found in an essay reflecting on the relevance of the Kerner Commission report to Great Britain. M. Young, "The Liberal Approach: Weaknesses and Strengths," *Daedalus*, XCVII (Fall 1968), 1379-89.

<sup>25</sup> The literature on the ombudsman is vast. A good sample would include: Walter Gellhorn, *Ombudsmen and Others* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1967); J. M. Capozzola, "An American Ombudsman" and James A. Storing, "The Norwegian Ombudsman for Civil Affairs: The First Three Years," *Western Political Quarterly*, XXI (June 1968), 43-48 and 49-56; C. S. Ascher, "The Grievance Man or Ombudsman," *Public Administration Review*, XXVII (June 1967),

**Table 1** A Scheme for the Analysis of Procedural Instruments

Function	Examples	Hypothetical Composition	Hypothetical Powers
Initiation: provides a flow of suggestions for possible public actions	Parties Interest groups Advisory bodies Experts and intellectuals Mass media	Relatively fluid and flexible in structure and participation to provide open flow of information, unless specific options are to be excluded	Quite limited, if any, powers to commit system or participants
Formulation: selects and develops one policy proposal	Planning agency Technical team Interest groups	Limited and specialized, "expert" membership	Seldom can commit system as a whole; may have power to commit participants to collective responsibility for proposal
Consultation: appraisal of potential consequences if proposed action were to be undertaken; weighing of proposal against alternatives	Advisory committee Board of directors representing diverse interest (legislatures, cabinets, etc., may also play this role) "Public debate"	Fairly open membership, though relevant test may be critical "interest" in proposed policy	Low power to commit system or group since discord and criticism functional

**Table 1** A Scheme for the Analysis of Procedural Instruments (*continued*)

Function	Examples	Hypothetical Composition	Hypothetical Powers
Aggregation: consolidation of support of critical elites to proposal	Cabinet Legislature Parties <i>Ad hoc</i> committees of power holders	Limited to relevant elites	Characterized by potential veto power of participants
Collaboration and coordination: synchronizes action of public and private agencies whose action anticipated by proposal	Planning councils Committees	Limited to those performing relevant functions	Effort to commit group to future actions, for each participant can hamper program realization
Ratification: formal, symbolic sanction of program and commitment of public resources and powers	Chief of state Legislature	Constitutionally prescribed	Formal power to commit system
Feedback: reappraisal of ongoing policy in light of consequences.	Provides decision makers with information on actual consequences and implications of policy.	May perform any of first five functions	

Systematic inventory is a task that has always appealed to students of comparative politics. We need not search for a single master taxonomy of procedural instruments. The situation-specific nature of policy analysis is more apt to require ad hoc formulations for specific problems and policy arenas. However, the simple scheme suggested in Table 1 presents one generalized approach based on the potential uses of procedural instruments by the decision maker. This outline is adapted from attempts to identify stages in the policy-making process.<sup>26</sup> Here it is not used as a descriptive model. I am not saying that all of these processes can be identified in any public decision, nor that there is any reason why they must occur in this order.<sup>27</sup> This scheme merely indicates some of the purposes for which procedural instruments might be used by policy makers, and also the possible composition and powers of such instruments.

### Policy Instrumentation

Procedural instrumentation, though particularly pertinent to the classic concerns of political science, is only one dimension of the task of policy analysis. In the design of measures, the selection from among the capabilities and resources of the state of that package of programs best suited to the accomplishment of a public objective is equally important.

Policy-oriented political scientists are interested in the problem of defining optimum strategies for coping with public problems. Unfortunately, the tradition of political science and the training of modern political scientists are poorly adapted to such work. Most public issues require detailed, expert substantive knowledge. The demographer is better prepared to explore the contours of population policy; the ecologist, environmental issues. Economists have more powerful general tools for weighing the utility of alternative courses of action in achieving specified objectives. The political scientist comes to feel that he has little relevant expertise of his own to bring to bear on such problems.

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174-77; G. E. Calden and N. Rapheli, "The Ombudsman Debate in Israeli Politics," *Parliamentary Affairs*, XXI (Summer 1967), 201-15; D.C. Rowat, "Recent Developments in Ombudsmanship," *Canadian Public Administration*, X (March 1967), 35-46; *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 3771 (May 1968) devotes an entire issue to the institution.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Harold Lasswell, *The Decision Process* (College Park, Md., 1956); Gabriel Almond and James Coleman, *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, 1960), pp. 14-16; Kirschen et al., *Economic Policy in Our Time*, 1: 265.

<sup>27</sup> For a thorough review of this problem see Morris Davis, "Some Aspects of Detroit's Decisional Profile," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, XII (September 1967), 211-19.

Nonetheless, in the division of labor of the policy sciences, the political scientist should be able to claim some special competence in the delineation of the problem-solving capabilities of the public order. When all is said and done, there are really only four basic forms of public policy, four ways in which the public order can make an impact on the society of which it is a part. The state can deploy its political attributes as a monopoly of legitimate force and as a focus of authority and prestige in the society. As an economic institution, the state can derive resources from the society through taxation, borrowing, and sale, and it can spend for public purposes. All the great and complex variety of forms, techniques, and programs of public policy are really elaborations of and combinations of these basic possibilities.<sup>28</sup>

For comparative policy analysis, one task becomes that of distinguishing the policy repertoire—the stock of policy equipment—that has evolved in different political systems. This would include both the more general traditions of public action that develop in any polity (direct public investment or incentives to private effort as preferred techniques) as well as the more idiosyncratic approaches to handling specific types of problems (different approaches to urban planning or compensation for properties expropriated in agrarian reform programs).

To establish the distinctiveness of the policy equipment of any political system, one must explain why instruments appear in the repertoire of some systems and not of others. One approach is to presume as normal

<sup>28</sup> There are several other approaches to the classification of public policies. Theodore Lowi suggests a taxonomy based on the distributive, redistributive, and regulative effects of public actions. See his "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies and Political Theory," *World Politics*, XVI (July 1964), 677–715. Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston, 1966), pp. 190–212, divide the capabilities of a political system into extractive, regulative, distributive aspects. Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics, Economics and Welfare* (New York, 1963), pp. 6–17, provide perhaps the most sophisticated classification, posing a number of complex continua of choices between public and private ownership, direct and indirect control, voluntary and compulsory association, and compulsion or information in the settlement of disputes. The most complex taxonomy of policy instruments I have ever seen is found in Kirschen et al., *Economic Policy in Our Time*. Here the question of economic choice is posed as a matter of the selection from and reconciliation of twelve policy objectives to be implemented by choosing from some sixty-three available instruments. In a three-volume work, the Kirschen group demonstrates the many comparative uses of this formulation. The scheme suggested here is developed further in the author's *Politics and Economic Change in Latin America* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 54–55. An example of an inventory of policy technique defined on quite another basis, for a totally different kind of public problem, is contained in the analysis of responses to the problem of cultural pluralism in Charles W. Anderson, Fred R. von der Mehden, and Crawford Young, *Issues of Political Development* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), pp. 75–83.

the international diffusion of policy technique and then to identify obstacles or blockages to such diffusion.

Canons of legitimacy, embodied in ideology, tradition, and constitutional convention, are one limit on the range of possibilities open to public authorities. In some societies, to spur production by the coercive mobilization of labor is simply beyond the range of options open to government. In others, the same objective may not be pursued by encouraging the competition of private entrepreneurs. In some nations, the accepted way of making production decisions will be by transmitting authoritative commands through a bureaucratic hierarchy. Elsewhere, such techniques will be deplored, and manipulation of taxation and monetary systems deemed more satisfactory instruments of economic control.

Historical development is a second factor that influences the range of policy equipment available in any polity. Since policy making depends so much on habitual responses to problems and on the use of preestablished equipment, the preferred approach to a particular kind of problem may depend heavily on the adaptation of means that have evolved from a specific problem-solving situation in the past.

Extant power relations may also delimit the spread of alternatives that will be considered appropriate responses to a given problem. Progressive taxation schemes, for example, may be seen to disadvantage critical power contenders. Finally, considerations of simple utility may preclude the inclusion of a specific item from the "world stock" in the agenda of means. The country that does not adopt a policy innovation from abroad may just not have the same problem as that which led to the creation of a particular policy technique. The agrarian reform measures adopted in the Andean American republics may not be pertinent to the land tenure practices of West Africa.

Once the relevant inhibitions to the diffusion of specific policy techniques are established, it is possible to state the conditions necessary for the transfer of a particular tool to a given polity. Tinbergen provides the following conceptual formulation of the problem. He defines *foundations* as elements connected with values and determining essential human relations—voting and property rights, opportunities for education, privileges of certain groups, and so forth. *Structure* connotes the details of socioeconomic organization, types of taxes, the market system—in short, the means established to achieve foundation objectives. *Instruments* in this scheme refer to a class of established means, subject to small and frequent changes. *Reforms*, then, become changes in foundations (perhaps the introduction of a social security system or the nationalization of industry). *Qualitative policy* involves changes in



structure (involving perhaps the number and type of taxes), while *quantitative policy* is concerned with incremental changes in an instrument, such as the tax rate.<sup>29</sup>

For the comparative policy analyst, the policy repertoire of a given state for coping with a specific problem includes therefore those means established and legitimate in the society; a second group of instruments that appears in the larger cultural or world stock and is potentially available for adoption; a third set that is probably not available to the particular polity except under specified conditions of change; and a fourth group that is probably unavailable to decision makers, barring regime transformation or a general change in the socioeconomic setting of the problem.

### Conclusions

In the coming development of the policy sciences, the task I have outlined for comparative politics seems a modest one. Nonetheless, it is a natural and a necessary function. The search for alternatives across national frontiers is only one phase of public problem solving, but it does accompany the consideration of public business in all societies. The question is whether this function can be made more rigorous and systematic.

The construction of procedures for the unraveling of complex problems so that significant factors that we can grapple with show through, the crafting of instruments to meet these problems—these would seem to be pertinent tasks for social science, and for political science in particular. In fact, presented this way, they seem totally unexceptional, and a very minor recasting of the present agenda of the discipline. But to focus on the instruments, on the techniques of governance, may help to clarify questions that were previously not quite so meaningful.

<sup>29</sup> Tinbergen, *Economic Policy*, p. 7.